

Key to Common Trees of Matthews State Forest

This key will help you identify some of the trees on this State Forest. To use the key, always start with # 1, and choose the better of the two statements. Follow the directions to other numbers, reading both choices carefully each time. When you get to the name of a tree, stop, and you'll have the name of the tree. Check the picture and description in the book to see if you are right.

- 1- Tree has needles in bunches of 5 -- Eastern white pine (Pinus strobus) OR
- 1- Tree has leaves – go to 2

- 2- Leaves opposite each other on the twig – go to 3 OR
- 2- Leaves alternate with each other along the twig – go to 4

- 3- Leaves oval; bark gray, with small blocks – Flowering dogwood (Cornus florida) OR
- 3- Leaves with 3 to 5 main points, toothed edges; bark gray, smooth or with ridges – Red maple (Acer rubrum)

- 4- Leaves simple (having only one part) – go to 5 OR
- 4- Leaves compound (divided into several parts); nuts may be on the tree – Hickory (Carya species)

- 5- Leaves basically oval, with a pointed tip – go to 6
- 5- Leaves with rounded or pointed lobes (parts that stick out, giving the leaf a unique shape) – go to 8

- 6- Leaves more than 6 inches long, wavy-edged; bark light gray-brown and flaky – Cucumbertree (Magnolia acuminata) OR
- 6- Leaves less than 6 inches long, with teeth along the edges – go to 7

- 7- Leaves have tiny teeth along edges; twig smells bitter when scratched; bark may look like burnt corn flakes – Black cherry (Prunus serotina) OR
- 7 – Leaves have jagged teeth; twig smells like wintergreen when scratched; young bark shiny, with slashes; old bark black, rough – Black or sweet birch (Betula lenta)

- 8- Leaves with smooth, rounded lobes – go to 9 OR
- 8- Leaves with pointed lobes – go to 10

- 9- Bark pale gray, loose and shredding, especially high on the trunk – White oak (Quercus alba) OR
- 9- Bark thick, brown, deeply cut into ridges – Chestnut oak (Quercus prinus)

- 10- Leaves with 4 to 6 pointed lobes, the last two even with each other; bark light gray and furrowed – Yellow-poplar (Liriodendron tulipifera) OR
- 10- Leaves with 7 or more pointed, bristle-tipped lobes – Scarlet, Black or Northern Red Oak (Quercus species)